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Contact: Sen. Virg Bernero
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Bernero's Abandoned Housing Bill Approved By Senate Committee

In the first major step toward Governor Granholm's desk, legislation sponsored by Sen. Virg Bernero (D-Lansing) to combat abandoned and unsafe "red tagged" houses in Lansing neighborhoods was approved today by a unanimous vote of the Senate Local, Urban and State Affairs Committee.

Sen. Bernero's legislation, Senate Bill 230, will give Lansing and other urban core cities in Michigan new authority to demolish abandoned and unsafe homes that plague our neighborhoods. "These 'red tagged' homes truly are a blight in our neighborhoods," Bernero said. "They create hazards for children, they attract drug dealers and prostitutes, and they degrade the value of nearby properties," he said.

"We cannot afford to wait any longer," Bernero said. "Some of these houses have been standing empty and abandoned for more than 10 years. The time is now to take action to force them to be rehabilitated or demolished. We need results, not excuses," Sen. Bernero said.

"My legislation will create a stronger incentive for property owners to repair red tagged houses while they are still in good enough condition to be rehabilitated. We would far prefer to fix these houses so they can again become someone's home," he said. "But this is also a warning to absentee landlords who allow their properties to sit abandoned and boarded up, degrading the quality of life in our neighborhoods," he said. "Our message is clear: fix the house or we will demolish it to make room for a new home," Bernero said.

Senate Bill 230 now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: A high-resolution image suitable for print media is available from today's committee hearing. The image features Sen. Bernero and Lansing City Council President Carol Wood testifying in favor of SB 230. To obtain an electronic copy of this image, please send an email to virgbernero@senate.michigan.gov or visit Sen. Bernero's website at <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/virgbernero/index.htm>]

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